

# PREHISTORIC STATUES.

## INTERESTING DISCOVERIES IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC.

*Correspondence of the Philadelphia Times.*

WASHINGTON, Nov. 22.—An official communication received at the Navy Department announces the discovery on Rapanni or Easter Island, on the charts in longitude 110° west and latitude 27° south, buried in the depths of the vast wilderness of waters of the South Pacific, of colossal statues and images rudely carved in stone. This remarkable find of archæological remains on a small island hundreds of miles away from any continent puzzles the learned scientists of the Smithsonian Institution and the National Museum. Prof. Baird says on the subject: "In the present advanced state of ethnological science these monuments are of the highest importance. They will throw light on the somewhat mysterious manner in which this island received its population."

The discoverers of these remarkable remains of a prehistoric and an advanced people in a part of the world synonymous with cannibalism and savage life were the officers of the German gunboat Hyena, while on a trip from Valparaiso to the Samoan Islands. The commander of this vessel, while thus cruising in the South Pacific, subsequently received orders from his Government to visit Easter Island and to secure these specimens. The accounts received by our Government indicate that the vessel remained at the island but a few days, but during that time the German officers made a considerable collection and copious notes. The results of their preliminary labors have been embraced in a pamphlet, which is reported at the Smithsonian Institution to contain a large amount of valuable information. The German Government, it is understood, are making preparations to send an expedition to Easter Island with a corps of scientists and engineers to sketch the island, survey the ground, and to make plans and sections of the prehistoric buildings and ruins.

Our own Government has also taken steps to secure some of these valuable remains for its own large and valuable ethnological collections representing the prehistoric and known races of this hemisphere. Instructions have already been sent to Admiral Upshur, in command of the South Pacific squadron, to send one of his vessels on a cruise in the direction of Easter Island and to make such explorations, collections, and reports as he may think important in the interests of his Government. It is understood that the Government of France is also turning its attention to this island with a view to the establishment of a protectorate.

It is reported in the accounts given by the German vessel that the island, which is small, is strewn with large stone images and sculptured tablets. The Smithsonian has offered \$1 each for prehistoric skulls with the lower jaw. The few people, of Polynesian extraction, who inhabit the island know nothing about the sculptured remains found, and even tradition gives no account of a people living there when their ancestors arrived.

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